

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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FOR AMBASSADOR FROM ATHERTON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: IN, EAID

SUBJECT:PEACE CORPS IN INDIA

REF: NEW DELHI 9264

1. AS A FOLLOW-UP TO YOUR TELEGRAM, DUBS ALONG WITH THE INDIA DESK OFFICER CALLED ON THE ACTING PEACE CORPS DIRECTOR GRETCHEN HANDWERGER ON JULY 5 WITH REGARD TO THE MAY 24 DISCUSSION IN DELHI AND THE CONCERNS EXPRESSED IN YOUR MESSAGE. ASIA AND PACIFIC REGIONAL DIRECTOR JOHN ANDREWS WHO MET WITH HEALTH SECRETARY PRASAD WAS AT THE MEETING AND PROVIDED BOTH BACKGROUND TO HIS MEETING WITH PRASAD AND WHERE CONSIDERATION OF A RESUMED PROGRAM NOW STANDS WITHIN ACTION.

2. AT THE OUTSET, DUBS REVIEWED OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE BACKGROUND OF THE INDIAN PROGRAM AND THE GOI DECISION IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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JUNE 1974 TO SEEK A FIVE-YEAR PHASE-OUT CULMINATING IN ZERO VOLUNTEERS BY JANUARY 1, 1979. PURSUANT TO OUR FOLLOW-UP DECISION, THE LAST PCV LEFT IN SUMMER 1976 AFTER THE NUMBER WAS REDUCED TO FIFTEEN IN THE FINAL PHASE. DUBS DESCRIBED OUR NEWLY IMPROVED BILATERAL RELATIONS AND OUR CONTINUING BELIEF THAT WE SHOULD PROCEED IN A CAREFULLY COORDINATED MANNER, INCLUDING CLOSE CONSULTATION WITH THE EMBASSY, WITH

REGARD TO LAUNCHING SPECIFIC NEW INITIATIVES TOWARD INDIA.

3. ANDREWS NOTED PRASAD HAD SPOKEN WITH ACTION DEPUTY DIRECTOR MARY KING IN GENEVA DURING A RECENT WHO CONFERENCE AND THAT PRASAD HAD EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN PEACE CORPS ASSISTANCE IN THE HEALTH CARE FIELD. KING SUBSEQUENTLY ASKED ANDREWS TO CALL PRASAD WHILE ANDREWS WAS TRANSITING NEW DELHI. WHEN ANDREWS TELEPHONED HE WAS ASKED BY PRASAD TO STOP BY FOR A CHAT. NO COMMITMENTS OF ANY KIND WERE MADE BY ANDREWS DURING THAT MEETING. IT IS CLEAR TO US THAT ANDREWS, WHO HAS MADE IT A PRACTICE TO WORK CLOSELY WITH DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS ON PEACE CORPS MATTERS, HAD NO INTENTION OF BYPASSING THE EMBASSY ON ANY MATTER OF SUBSTANCE. IN ANY CASE, PRASAD IN HIS COMMENTS ENCOURAGED ACTION TO LOOK AT THE QUESTION OF A POSSIBLE RESUMPTION OF AN INDIAN PROGRAM.

4. ANDREWS RECALLED FOR OUR INFORMATION THAT THE 1962 AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE USG AND GOI ON THE PEACE CORPS FORMALLY REMAINS IN EFFECT DESPITE THE PHASE-OUT. HANDWERGER AND ANDREWS STRESSED THAT ACTION FULLY INTENDS TO COORDINATE CLOSELY WITH THE DEPARTMENT AND WITH YOU IN CONSIDERING AND DEVELOPING ANY PROPOSAL FOR A RESUMED PROGRAM IN INDIA. THEY ARE BEING RESPONSIVE TO PRASAD TO THE EXTENT OF CONSIDERING WITHIN ACTION THE RANGE OF POSSIBLE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BILITIES FOR A PROGRAM BUT THEY HAVE NOT ORGANIZED A "TASK FORCE" ON THE QUESTION AS WAS REPORTED NOR HAVE ANY DECISIONS BEEN REACHED WITHIN ACTION ON A RESUMED PROGRAM. ACTING PEACE CORPS DIRECTOR HANDWERGER SAID SHE WAS SORRY THAT THERE HAD NOT BEEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONSULT WITH YOU BEFORE YOUR DEPARTURE FOR DELHI. SHE EXPRESSED HOPE YOU COULD MEET WITH ACTION OFFICIALS ON YOUR NEXT VISIT TO WASHINGTON.

5. WE FEEL THAT THE MEETING LAID THE BASIS FOR CLOSE COOPERATION BETWEEN ACTION, THE DEPARTMENT AND THE EMBASSY. ACTION IS AWARE OF YOUR CONCERNS AND WILL TAKE THEM INTO ACCOUNT AS IT WEIGHS THE POSSIBILITY OF A RESUMED PROGRAM. WE WOULD BE HAPPY TO PURSUE SPECIFIC IDEAS YOU HAVE WITH HANDWERGER AND ANDREWS AND WOULD WELCOME ANY THOUGHTS THAT YOU HAVE AT THIS TIME ON THE SUBJECT. VANCE

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